

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

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COMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

USS FORRESTAL

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

UNCLAS MARSEILLE 0294

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MILI

SUBJECT: VISIT TO MARSEILLE OF CTF SIX ZERO AND USS FORRESTAL

1. THE USS FORRESTAL VISIT TO MARSEILLE, JUNE 7 TO 21 FOR INDUSTRIAL MAINTENANCE, WAS AN UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME DURING THE POST WAR 2 PERIOD THAT A US AIRCRAFT CARRIER HAD BEEN MOORED IN THE PORT. THIS AND THE FACT THE SHIP WAS HERE FOR SERVICE BY MARSEILLE SHIP REPAIR FACILITIES MADE THE EVENT VERY NEWSWORTHY ON ITS OWN MERITS. BUT THE ADDITION OF AN EXCELLENT PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM MOUNTED BY THE COMMANDS OF CTF SIX ZERO AND THE USS FORRESTAL AND SUPPORTED BY THIS POST PROVIDED AN EVEN GREATER MEASURE OF VISIBILITY AND LOCAL IMPACT.

2. MAIN ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED DURING THE VISIT INCLUDED AN ON-BOARD PRESS CONFERENCE THE AFTERNOON OF ARRIVAL DAY, COURTESY CALLS BY THE COMMANDING OFFICERS ON THE DEPARTMENTAL PREFET, SENIOR LOCAL FRENCH ARMY AND NAVY COMMANDING OFFICERS, AND ONE VICE ADMIRAL TARDY AT TOULON, UNCLASSIFIED

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A CALL ON THE PRESIDENTS OF MARSEILLE'S PORT AUTHORITY AND THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, A CALL ON MAYOR DEFFERRE WHO PAID A RETURN CALL WITH HIS WIFE FOR A LUNCHEON ON BOARD AND A SHIP'S TOUR, LUNCHEONS AND DINNER HOSTED BY THE NAVY AND ARMY COMMANDANTS, A RECEPTION AT THE CONSUL GENERAL'S RESIDENCE, A LUNCHEON BY THE PROPELLER CLUB OF MARSEILLE, A TOUR OF THE REGION FOR ADMIRAL AND MRS. SCHOULTZ

BY THE PREFET. ON THE LIGHTER SIDE BUT SIGNIFICANT WAS A PLEASANT AFTERNOON OF SAILING FOR ADMIRAL AND MRS. SCHOULTZ WITH MAYOR DEFFERRE AND MADAME ON THE DEFFERRE'S YACHT.

3. LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE THROUGHOUT THE VISIT WAS FREQUENT, EXTENSIVE, AND POSITIVE. EVEN THE CORRESPONDENT OF LEFT-WING LIBERATION, WHO GOT A FIVE HOUR GUIDED TOUR, COULD FIND NO BASIS FOR CRITICAL REPORTING AND PRODUCED A GENERALLY FAIR THOUGH AT POINTS LIGHTLY SARCASTIC REVIEW OF HER EXPERIENCE.

4. THE OFFICERS AND MEN ON BOARD THE FORRESTAL DESERVE THE REAL RECOGNITION FOR THE GREAT SUCCESS OF THIS VISIT. THE EVENTS THEY ORGANIZED, THEIR BEHAVIOR ON SHORE WHETHER "ON THE STREET" OR AS GUESTS IN HOMES OF FRENCH HOSTS, THEIR ATTITUDES WHILE ESCORTING TOURS ON BOARD SHIP, ALL OF THESE OCCASIONS AMPLY REVEALED A HIGHLY MOTIVATED GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO PROVED EXCELLENT AMBASSADORS FOR OUR COUNTRY. INCIDENTS WERE REMARKABLY FEW AND RELATIVELY MINOR WHICH IS PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY CONSIDERING THAT THERE WERE APPROXIMATELY 2500 PERSONS ON LIBERTY EACH DAY.

5. LOCAL REACTION WAS SPONTANEOUSLY WARM AND POSITIVE. MANY LOCAL RESIDENTS SAW THE SHIP AS MEMBERS OF SMALL GROUPS WHICH WERE GIVEN GUIDED TOURS. PUBLIC VISITING WAS POSSIBLE ONLY ON THE MOST LIMITED BASIS DUE TO REPAIRS UNDERWAY AT THE TIME.
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SOME 1000 CREW MEMBERS WERE INVITED INTO LOCAL FRENCH HOMES FOR MEALS AND HOSPITALITY THROUGH A SYSTEM ORGANIZED BY THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE OF THE CONSULATE GENERAL AND THE USO. THE USO FACILITY ITSELF PROVED INDISPENSIBLE FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICING OF LIBERTY PARTIES: (THE POST HOPES THAT IT WILL BE ABLE TO CONVINCE THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO HELP PROVIDE A PERMANENT FACILITY TO REPLACE THE CURRENT TEMPORARY ARRANGEMENT WHICH WE HAVE AVAILABLE COURTESY OF THE FRENCH NAVY.)

6. TO SUMMARIZE, THE USS FORRESTAL VISIT WAS MOST SUCCESSFUL FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THOSE ON BOARD, THE MARSEILLAIS, AND THIS POST. THERE WAS NO TRACE OF ANY LOCAL HOSTILITY, IN FACT THERE WAS GREAT DEMAND FOR EVEN THE MOST MODEST SOUVENIR FROM THE SHIP. TO TOP THINGS OFF NICELY, REAR ADMIRAL SCHOULTZ THROUGH CONGEN MARSEILLE PLACED A VERY FORTHCOMING OPEN THANK YOU LETTER TO MARSEILLE IN THE LOCAL PRESS WHICH RECEIVED WIDE DISTRIBUTION. THE POSITIVE PUBLIC AFFAIRS ADVANTAGE ACCRUING TO THE US AND TO OUR NAVY FROM THIS SHIP VISIT IS VERY LARGE INDEED. IT IS GREATLY HOPED THAT THIS STRONG MOMENTUM, WHICH HAS BEEN DEVELOPED BY THE SIXTH FLEET AND THIS POST IN A REGION NOT ALWAYS SO WARM TOWARD

THE US, WILL BE MAINTAINED AND STRENGTHENED YET FURTHER BY
FUTURE SIXTH FLEET VISITORS TO THESE SHORES.

7. IN PASSING, IT SHOULD BE MENTIONED THAT THE QUESTION OF
VISITS BY US ATOMIC POWERED SHIPS NEVER AROSE OFFICIALLY
OR IN THE PRESS.

8. ALL UNITS OF THIS POST GAVE THEIR FULLEST EFFORT TO
SUPPORTING THIS MAJOR POST PROJECT. THE ICA STAFF AND THE
ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION DESERVE SPECIAL RECOGNITION FOR HARD
JOBS VERY WELL DONE. MEIMA

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